

National Policy on Protected Areas' Neighbours and Resident Communities

September 2013





Republic of Namibia
Ministry of Environment and Tourism

Author: MET

Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Troskie House, Uhland Street
P/Bag 13346, Windhoek
Tel: (+264 61) 284 2111

Directorate of Regional Services and Park Management
PZN Building, Northern Industria
P/Bag 13306, Windhoek
Tel: (+264 61) 284 2518

© MET 2013

Reproduction of this publication for educational or other non-commercial purposes without prior permission from the copyright holder is authorized, provided the source is fully acknowledged.

Reproduction of this publication for resale or other commercial purposes without prior written permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.

Cover Photo: Michael Sibalatani



FOREWORD

Namibia has a well-developed network of protected areas that makes a major contribution to the conservation objectives contained in the country's development goals. However, these national parks and game reserves has for many years remained largely separate from the people who live around their borders or within the parks themselves. As a result there are often negative impacts on the habitats and wildlife conserved by the protected areas because neighbours are hostile to the parks. Further, the considerable economic opportunities that protected areas offer have in the past remained outside the reach of local communities and local entrepreneurs.

People living in or next to protected areas often suffer losses from wildlife such as predators that kill livestock or elephants that damage crops and property. Most protected areas were established on land that in the past was occupied by people and many park neighbours today have cultural associations with areas within the parks.

Namibia's protected area network makes significant contributions to the conservation of biodiversity which is of national and international importance and contribute to the maintenance of ecosystem services as well as contributing to the socio economic benefits of local communities who are neighbours or/and residents of such protected areas. It is important to create positive attitudes of residents and neighbours towards protected areas and capitalize on sound management with them to enhance conservation activities.

The welfare of communities neighbouring or/and residing in protected areas and the successful management of protected areas are interrelated. Protected areas are valuable resource for community development. Not only are protected areas a source of useful natural resources, which in many cases are declining in neighbouring areas, but protected areas are also a source of development resources, such as income earning opportunities, skills resources, communications infrastructure, educational resources and development catalysts.

It is for these purposes that a detailed policy has been developed to provide guidelines on the involvement of neighbours and resident people in protected area management and benefits thereof, while at the same time recognizing the need to promote biodiversity conservation.



Uahekua Herunga, MP
MINISTER



PREFACE

The establishment and existence of Protected Areas, is the cornerstone of conservation in Namibia and has a long and respected history. In some part of the country, protected areas were established with little recognition of local community rights and traditions, and are managed to exclude consumptive uses or limit human activities. It is therefore important that these protected areas provide social, economic and cultural benefits to neighbours and residents of such areas.

The scale and urgency of the matter require Government to develop an integrated, flexible and comprehensive policy towards dealing with neighbours and residents to protected areas that can provide a framework for all stakeholders and can meet the country's national and international commitments to biodiversity conservation while taking into account the rights and development needs of its people.

This document sets out the Government policy on protected areas, neighbours and resident communities. The strategies to implement the policy provides the content for this document and include engagement with neighbours and/or residents of protected areas, promoting socio-economic development, landscape conservation and zoning of protected areas, liaison and communication, transfrontier conservation and ecosystem management across larger landscapes.

This policy has been developed through consultations with a broad range of stakeholders that include traditional authorities, communal area farmers, freehold farmers, conservancies, Government officials in various ministries, Non-Governmental Organizations and researchers. The policy is based on the ideas and experience of these stakeholders and of officials of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism over many years. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism would like to thank all its partners and stakeholders who participated in developing this policy.


Simeon N. Negumbo
Permanent Secretary



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	i
Preface	ii
Table of contents	iii
Abbreviations	iv
1. Introduction	1
2. Policy Framework	1
2.1 Aim	1
2.2 Objectives	1
3. Principles	2
4. Strategies	
4.1 Engagement of neighbours and/or residents of Protected Areas	2
4.2 Promoting Socio-economic development and benefits	3
4.3 Integrated park management, zoning and landscape conservation	4
4.4 Building community skills, liaison and communication	5
4.5 Transfrontier conservation and ecosystem management	6
Across larger landscapes	
5. Institutional Framework	7
6. Monitoring and Evaluation	7
Bibliography	7
Glossary	8

ABBREVIATIONS

MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
TBNRM	Transboundary Natural Resource Management
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
TFP	Transfrontier Park

1. Introduction

Most of Namibia's protected areas were proclaimed before Namibia's Independence in 1990 and have been maintained as islands of conservation separated from surrounding communities, their land uses and local economies. This policy sets out a vision of how Namibia's protected areas can contribute not only to conservation, but also to other national development goals such as economic development, and how the protected areas can benefit the people who are neighbours to these areas or who are resident within them.

Protected areas are set for the propagation, protection, study and preservation therein of wild animal life, wild plant life and objects of geological, ethnological, archaeological, historical and other scientific interest and for the benefit and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the territories and other persons. These are significant national assets, not only because of contribution to GDP but also for those living in and around them.

The Nature Conservation Ordinance, 1975 (Ordinance 4 of 1975) as amended by the Nature Conservation Amendment Act (Act 5 of 1996) provides legislative basis for protected areas, neighbours and resident communities.

Provision will accordingly be made in any legislation which shall repeal the Nature Conservation Ordinance, as amended, for a proper administrative, legal and procedural framework for protected areas, neighbours and resident communities.

2. POLICY FRAMEWORK

Where it is in the interests of improved conservation and promotion of national development goals, the Government will engage and closely work with protected area residents and/or neighbours or other relevant stakeholders, giving particular attention to promoting their socio-economic development and benefits, and their involvement in the conservation, planning and development of the protected areas.

2.1 Aim

The aim of the Policy is to contribute to the improvement of conservation efforts of Namibia's protected areas, provide greater social equity in accessing benefits from protected areas and stimulate local economic development through creating business opportunities linked to protected areas.

2.2 Objectives

2.2.1 To define and strengthen the relationship between protected areas, neighbours and resident communities.

2.2.2 To promote management of natural resources with protected area neighbours across larger landscapes, including Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA) and Transfrontier Parks (TFP), for enhanced ecosystem conservation and socio-economic development.

2.2.3 To provide a framework for zoning of protected areas for different land uses in order to accommodate the development needs of resident communities.

2.2.4 To create improved communication, skills, and enhance mutual understanding between park management authorities, neighbours and resident communities.

2.2.5 To meet the country's national and international commitments to biodiversity conservation while taking into account the rights and development needs of the people.

3. Principles

The Policy is based on the following fundamental principles:

3.1 Protected areas are the cornerstone of Namibia's conservation programme and will continue to play an important role in the conservation of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity.

3.2 Protected areas also have the potential to provide important economic benefits, locally, regionally and nationally. This policy recognizes the Government's emphasis on rural development and protected areas should be managed to provide the possible benefits to residents and neighbours within the limits of ecological and economic sustainability.

3.3 Communities living in or adjacent to protected areas often have long-standing relationships with the land in these areas which should be acknowledged and respected.

3.4 Where it is in the overriding interests of conservation that people residing in a protected area should be relocated from that area, through appropriate structures and consultations, they should be provided with alternative access to productive land and support to re-establish themselves in their new locations.

3.5 The rights of resident communities and neighbours to food security through agriculture based enterprises in multiple use areas and areas adjacent to parks are acknowledged.

4. Strategies

In order to implement the policy on Protected Areas, Neighbours and Resident Communities, a number of linked and integrated strategies are required. The following are the main strategies aimed at achieving the aim and objectives of the policy:

4.1 Engagement of neighbours and/or residents of Protected Areas

The government through the Ministry of Environment and Tourism has adopted several strategies to engage with people neighbouring and living inside protected areas. These include the establishment of park advisory committees, collaboration with neighbors, awarding of concessions to local communities and the conclusion of agreements for co-operation and benefit-sharing with residents and neighbors.

The specific objectives of this strategy are:

- To define the rights, benefits, access, duties and obligations of the neighbours and/or residents to protected areas, as may be appropriate and in the best interests of conservation.
- To define any restrictions on the activities of people residing in protected areas.

Strategic approach

Where appropriate, the Ministry will engage with neighbours and/or residents of protected areas on activities that define the relationship between these neighbours and/or residents, the protected area and the park management, and which define the ways in which they will benefit from the park, contribute to its management objectives, and the nature of interactions between the parties involved. Any such engagement or interactions shall be approved by the Minister.

Where it will promote improved conservation and/or improved relationships with protected area residents or neighbours, the Ministry will engage and closely work with protected area residents and/or neighbours through their existing structures. This engagement strategy will provide for the sustainable management of certain human activities, wildlife and/or wildlife habitats within a protected area, and/or the adjacent

land units that form part of the engagement.

4.2 Promoting Socio-economic development and benefits

The total economic value generated by protected areas can be categorized into different types of value, providing a useful framework for analysis. Direct use values are generated by the consumptive and non-consumptive use of park resources. In the case of Namibia's protected areas, most of this value is non-consumptive tourism value. Consumptive values include the tourism value generated by hunting concessions within protected areas. In addition, protected areas provide a source of live game for sale to private enterprises, supply game to neighbouring conservancies through translocation programmes and provide game meat to traditional authority festivals, own use and game meat to drought relief programmes.

Indirect use values are generated by outputs from the protected area system that form inputs into production by other sectors of the economy, or that contribute to net economic outputs elsewhere by saving on costs. These outputs are derived from ecosystem functioning. Ecosystems potentially provide a wide range of such services.

The specific objectives of this strategy are:

- To provide possible benefit for people whose lives are impacted or affected by protected areas, provided that i) these benefits are ecologically and economically sustainable and ii) these benefits are in accordance with the objectives of a particular protected area as defined in the management plan.
- To develop protected areas in support of economic growth and development in the regions where they are located.

Strategic approach

Appropriate economic opportunities and benefits will be provided to protected area residents and neighbours in accordance with the Government's Policy on Tourism and Wildlife Concessions on State Land.

Protected areas will be integrated into local and regional economies through:

- Serving as core areas of protection from which wildlife can move into adjacent areas for sustainable use and tourism activities by neighbours such as communal conservancies.
- Providing incentives for the development of wildlife and wildlife-based tourism activities on land adjacent to protected areas.
- Providing employment opportunities for people living in or adjacent to the protected area.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of local tourism-based enterprises.
- Encouraging residents to form representative bodies in consultation with their traditional authorities to ensure effective communication with MET.
- Endeavour to provide sufficient and suitable space for healthy living conditions and social amenities for residents, and access to all normal social services, recognizing however, the benefits of peripheral development.

The government will identify which resources can be used by protected area neighbours and residents and in what circumstances use can be considered acceptable within the limitations of the specific park conservation objectives.

The government will also identify the quantity of resources that could be utilized, and what environmental and conservation objectives must exist for such use to take place. The human use shall take account of adverse conditions and accommodate the primary needs of ecology of specific parks.

The environmental and conservation benefits for protected areas, neighbours and resident relations shall be supported and are:

- Improved long term security of biodiversity,
- Fewer conservation incompatible land uses in areas adjacent to protected areas,
- Enhanced connectivity for migratory wildlife, reduced habitat degradation around water points in protected areas,
- Reduced hunting pressures,
- Enhanced protection of underrepresented vegetation types (dwarf shrub savannah, highland shrubland and thornbush shrubland), and •Enhanced resilience of Namibia's protected area system to climate change related shocks and stressors.

In order for protected areas neighbors and resident communities to participate in a tourism business and nature based enterprises, there needs to be a legal entity with the right to enter into contracts on behalf of a defined community.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism will ensure that tourism businesses and nature based enterprises that are awarded to protected areas neighbors and resident communities or where local communities are involved, including joint ventures, provide a full range of benefits that includes income, employment, the opportunity to provide "spin off" services and the opportunity to be an owner of the tourism business and nature based enterprises.

4.3 Integrated park management, zoning and landscape conservation

Namibia face the need to manage large populations of highly mobile wildlife species that can even be destructive such as elephant, buffalo and, to a lesser extent hippo, and the need to address threats to human life and livestock caused by lion and crocodile. Furthermore, fire, wildlife diseases, wildlife crime, tourism development and the harmonization of land uses are major regional challenges.

The result is that parks, conservancies and community forests are interdependent. Poor land use, fire management and wildlife crime in one area will have a negative impact on another. Also, the sustainability of a park is questionable if its adjoining communities are left undeveloped with high levels of poverty and heavily depleted natural resources. However, well co-ordinated land use practices across adjoining areas can improve the resource base and enable new economic opportunities.

Protected areas are critically important for the sustainability of conservancies and community forests, which due to their size and high density settlement, are not individually viable as core areas for tourism and wildlife breeding and utilization. Without the parks, tourism development and trophy hunting in conservancies would not be possible. For these reasons holistic, integrated approaches, zoning and land use planning at a landscape level are essential for Namibia's protected areas and their adjacent areas.

The specific objectives of this strategy are:

- To provide for demarcation of protected areas with resident communities in zones for different levels of use and in particular to accommodate the residential areas and developmental needs of resident communities.
- To promote and encourage landscape conservation and integrated park management in order to ensure that land uses in areas adjacent to existing protected areas are compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives, and corridors are established to sustain the viability of wildlife populations.
- To lift the barriers to promotion of large scale network of landscape conservation and address

threats to habitat and species loss on a landscape level approach so as to ensure greater responsiveness to variability and seasonality issues around climate change.

Strategic approach

Where appropriate, protected areas with resident communities can be zoned for different levels of use, including core areas, multiple use areas, and residential areas which can be used to reduce conflict with residents and/or neighbours and to allow resources in the park to be used for socio-economic benefit in a regulated manner.

Landscape conservation to areas adjacent to protected areas should be promoted where appropriate.

MET will support the development of wildlife-based economic opportunities and promote other enterprise opportunities linked to the protected area, promote compatible forms of land use through institutions such as conservancies, community forests, tourism enterprises and assist neighbours and resident to protected areas with human wildlife conflict management in terms of the Government's National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management and any other relevant policies, legislation or directives of the Government.

Through landscape conservation, MET will work closely with neighbours and resident communities and other stakeholders to manage wildlife, combat wildlife crime, prevent wild animals and livestock diseases, and provide environmental education, community awareness programme and training, and support game monitoring and research.

The nature of landscape conservation will vary according to the circumstances of each protected area.

MET will ensure that all sectors work together through an integrated approach and that participatory approaches through landscape conservation can lead to better conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Landscape conservation areas will adopt a landscape level conservation approach that goes beyond protected area boundaries or communal conservancies by viewing landscapes as ecological blocks. This approach will improve the returns per unit of investment in protected areas by spreading conservation management, and benefits across a wider scale.

4.4 Building community skills, liaison and communication

Protected areas neighbours and resident communities are generally unable to promote their own development due to the lack of skills and information. The lack of skills and information has a large influence on protected areas as communities try to pursue livelihoods which are traditional and which they are familiar with. Such livelihoods have shown themselves to be largely unsustainable as populations increase, thereby placing greater pressure on remaining resources in protected areas. The long term conservation of protected areas therefore depends on neighbouring and resident communities acquiring new skills with which to develop themselves and being informed to pursue livelihoods that make less consumptive use of natural resources.

The specific objectives of this strategy are:

- To strengthen management of certain activities with resident communities and/or neighbours through regular communication and liaison.
- To build community capacity through providing access to developed skills existing within the protected areas.

Strategic approach

Liaison and communication with residents in or adjacent to protected areas will take place on a regular basis in order to address problems and conflicts, share information, and implement sustainable management of wildlife resources. Such liaison, for example the Park Advisory Committee for a specific protected area, should have clear terms of reference.

Protected area staff should also carry out regular contacts with residents and/or neighbours in order to promote good relationships and the regular exchange of information.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism shall identify skills for protected area neighbours and residents community development and offer or support communities to gain the required skills. Protected area staff, and where necessary local NGOs, shall undertake participatory rural appraisals and other surveys to identify priorities in the community neighboring and residing in protected areas.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism shall also identify the skills and resources which protected areas can assist the community with, identify the skills and resources which other institutions will need to contribute to the community, and link the community with appropriate institutions, Ministries, Regional Councils and NGOs that can assist in skills development.

Protected area neighbours and resident communities through their management structures are expected to actively participate in the identification of skills and monitoring of the natural resources, environmental goods services and habitats and related ecosystems. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism will set resource harvesting guidelines and community benefits which will be consistent with principles of sustainability. With regard to resource monitoring and the application of data in making management decisions, this policy recognizes the participatory monitoring system that involves protected areas neighbours and resident communities.

4.5 Transfrontier conservation and ecosystem management across larger landscapes

Transfrontier conservation and ecosystem management across larger landscapes have the potential to contribute significantly to regional biodiversity conservation, regional, national and local-level economic development, mainly through tourism development, social and cultural cross-border contacts and cooperation, information and experience sharing, and building of a culture of peace and cooperation between neighbouring countries and communities.

There are different types of transboundary conservation cooperation. Transboundary Natural Resource Management (TBNRM) is where different stakeholders (not necessarily governments) cooperate to manage a resource that is shared across national boundaries. Transfrontier Parks (TFP) are established where governments formally cooperate to manage adjoining parks across international boundaries. A Transfrontier Conservation Area is where not only protected areas, but also other land users and landholders combine to manage a large area of land for conservation across international boundaries. Such areas might include private or communal land.

The specific objective of this strategy:

- To promote sustainable management of certain activities with protected area neighbours across larger landscapes, including transfrontier conservation areas and transfrontier parks for enhanced ecosystem conservation and socio-economic development.

Strategic approach

Protected areas often do not encompass whole ecosystems and the range of wildlife in protected areas

often seasonally covers land outside these areas. In order to enhance ecosystem conservation and in order to maximize socio-economic benefits the government may establish partnerships and appropriate institutional mechanisms with neighbouring States and wildlife authorities to identify appropriate land units for better management of shared natural resources that straddle the international borders and drive equitable socio-economic benefits through sustainable use. In some cases, this will provide links between isolated protected areas.

Where the government is collaborating with conservation and tourism agencies in neighbouring States on the development of transfrontier conservation areas and transfrontier parks, it will promote the harmonization of policies, strategies and practices for the involvement and benefit of resident and neighbouring communities, and for the benefit of all citizens and the country in general. Such transfrontier conservation areas and transfrontier parks will be established through a treaty.

5. Institutional Framework

5.1 The Ministry of Environment and Tourism is the coordinating and leading institution in the implementation of this Policy.

5.2 Traditional authorities, communal and freehold neighbours and/or residents, communal area conservancies, line Ministries, Regional Councils, the private sector and NGOs, will, in practical terms and where appropriate, support these strategies by implementing programmes and projects together with the Ministry.

5.3 Where relevant and appropriate, the NGOs and private sector will be invited by the MET to become involved in the provision of planning, training, extension services, material inputs to resident communities and neighbours of protected areas.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

6.1 The impact of the implementation of this policy and progress, and constraints regarding its implementation will be periodically assessed by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, and where necessary in consultation with other stakeholders.

6.2 The engagement with resident communities and neighbours, concessions awarded in protected areas, Event/Incident Book system and other activities of the communities and relevant stakeholders will be used for monitoring and evaluation of this policy.

BIBIOGRAPHY

1. Government Gazette. 1996. Nature Conservation Amendment Act, 1996 (Act 5 of 1996)
2. Government Gazette. 1975. Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975 (Number 4 of 1975)
3. Ministry of Environment and Tourism. 2009. National Policy on Human Wildlife Conflict Management
4. Ministry of Environment and Tourism. 2007. Policy on Tourism and Wildlife Concessions on State Land

GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this policy, the words or phrases set out below have the following meanings:

Conservancy	Communal area conservancy gazetted in terms of the Nature Conservation Amendment Act (No.5 of 1996).
Core area	An area within a protected area or conservancy that is exclusively zoned for biodiversity conservation.
Human-Wildlife Conflict	Any event in which wild animals harm, destroy or damage human life or property (including damage to or destruction of crops), or in which wild animals are injured, captured or destroyed as a result of a perceived threat to humans or their property.
Government	Government of the Republic of Namibia.
Minister	The Minister of Environment and Tourism.
Ministry	The Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
Multiple use area	An area within a protected area that is zoned to support biodiversity conservation and other land uses of communities residing in such a protected area, as specified in the park management plan.
Landscape conservation	Compatible land use to biodiversity conservation in areas with a cluster of different land units which are potentially under different tenure. This refers to areas adjacent to protected areas.
Neighbours	Occupiers of communal land or freehold farms immediately adjacent to protected areas.
Protected Area	Formal protected area proclaimed in the Government Gazette according to the Nature Conservation Ordinance number 4 of 1975.
Resident community	People who are residing in a protected area and not the employees of the Ministry, line Ministries, Parastatals, Private companies and NGOs or any such person working on a temporally basis in a protected area. Resident community also include any persons who may be allowed to reside within a protected area in terms of any partnership management agreement between the MET and the residents of that protected area.
Representative bodies	Structures formed to represent the interest of communities and private land holders in areas adjacent to protected areas, with clear terms of reference.
Stakeholder	Any individual, group of individuals, organization or Government department or agency that is affected by the management and existence of protected areas.

